CLAIMS:

We claim:

1. A meta-data driven resource management system comprising:

a resource non-specific database comprising a plurality of resource records corresponding to multiple different types of resources;

a metadata manager programmed to define records within said database according to resource name and resource attributes for different resource types specified within metadata definitions of said different resource types; and,

a resource manager coupled to said metadata manager and said database, said resource manager comprising a configuration for creating, locating and reserving resource instances based upon resource types stored in said database and defined within a corresponding metadata definition.

2. The system of claim 1, further comprising a user interface (UI) generation component coupled to said resource manager and configured to generate a UI for said creating, locating and reserving of said resource instances based upon said resource attributes specified within corresponding ones of said metadata definitions of said different resource types.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein each of said metadata definitions further specify a resource containment hierarchy.

4. The system of claim 3, further comprising an access control manager coupled to said resource manager and configured to limit access to individual ones of said resource instances based upon a specification of a resource containment hierarchy within a corresponding one of said metadata definitions.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein said database, metadata manager and resource manager are disposed within a collaborative computing application.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein said collaborative computing application comprises a learning management system programmed to manage learning resources comprising classrooms and instructors.

7. A metadata driven resource management method comprising the steps of:

processing individual metadata documents to identify respective resource names and corresponding resource attributes specified within said individual metadata documents;

creating new resource instances to be managed based upon said respective resource names and said corresponding resource attributes identified within said individual metadata documents;

persisting said new resource instances in a resource non-specific database; and,

locating and managing individual ones of said new resource instances based upon said individual metadata documents.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of generating individual user interface (UI) screens for managing selected resource instances based upon corresponding resource attributes specified within individual metadata documents used to create said selected resource instances.

9. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of limiting access to said new resource instances based upon a specification of a resource containment hierarchy within each of said metadata documents.

10. A metadata driven resource management method comprising the step of adding a new manageable resource instance of a new manageable resource type to a resource non-specific database containing a set of manageable resource instances created from corresponding pre-existing manageable resource types which differ from the new resource type, the adding step comprising the steps of:

defining the new manageable resource type in a markup language document with a specified resource name and at least one specified resource attribute;

generating a user interface (UI) for creating and managing the new manageable resource instance based upon said at least one specified resource attribute in said markup language document; and,

writing the new manageable resource instance to the database.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of locating and managing the new manageable resource instance in the database through said UI.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said managing step comprises the step of reserving the new manageable resource instance through said UI.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein the defining step comprises the step of defining the new manageable resource type in a markup language document with a specified resource name, at least one specified resource attribute and a containment hierarchy.

14. The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of limiting access to the new manageable resource instance based upon an access control list.

15. A machine readable storage having stored thereon a computer program for metadata driven resource management, the computer program comprising a routine set of instructions which when executed by the machine cause the machine to perform the steps of:

processing individual metadata documents to identify respective resource names and corresponding resource attributes specified within said individual metadata documents;

creating new resource instances to be managed based upon said respective resource names and said corresponding resource attributes identified within said individual metadata documents;

persisting said new resource instances in a resource non-specific database; and,

locating and managing individual ones of said new resource instances based upon said individual metadata documents.

16. The machine readable storage of claim 15, further comprising the step of generating individual user interface (UI) screens for managing selected resource instances based upon corresponding resource attributes specified within individual metadata documents used to create said selected resource instances.

17. The machine readable storage of claim 15, further comprising the step of limiting access to said new resource instances based upon a specification of a resource containment hierarchy within each of said metadata documents.